



### A Partnership Between



## 2011 Rain Barrel Program Report

### Written by:

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District

### For:

The City of Columbus

After the completion of our first season of the GreenSpot Backyard Conservation Program for rain barrels, all of us involved would like to say Thank You! To Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman and his environmental steward Erin Miller for spearheading this effort to reduce runoff pollution and save homeowners money; to the Columbus Department of Utilities and staff for their programmatic input and support; to EarthMinded who developed and manufactured this easy-to-install rain barrel; to the watershed groups Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries (FACT) and Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed (FLOW) whose volunteers conducted workshops and mostly to Columbus households, who participated in the program.

### **Overview**

The City of Columbus has a variety of efforts organized to provide conservation and sustainability message and resources to residents and businesses. These programs include Get Green Columbus, Project Clean Streams, and GreenSpot initiatives. In 2011, a pilot rain barrel program was expanded through a partnership established by Mayor Michael B. Coleman with Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, local watershed groups, and EarthMinded (a subsidiary of Greif, Inc.).

The rain barrel program began to take shape in 2009 as EarthMinded designed a new rain barrel- one that was easy to install, functional and attractive. The City of Columbus was given the opportunity to disperse free barrels to residents in one Columbus neighborhood to test the equipment and monitor results. The *RainStation* barrel proved to be both popular with residents and a great outreach tool for storm water management. With support from the City of Columbus, Franklin Soil and Water administered the continuation of the rain barrel program, embarking on research and logistical development, leveraging further funding, and building a unique experience by working with partners to educate residents about storm water and water conservation.



### **“Gateway” Best Management Practice**

The EarthMinded™ RainStation™ RS-0001 is a simple-to-use and attractive rain barrel for home rainwater collection and storage. The large capacity, 60-gallon rain barrel connects to your downspout and automatically collects runoff water from your home's roof. Collecting rain water allows for water utility savings for home gardeners, and is a the perfect “gateway” storm water best management practice. The rain barrel program highlights these important points and introduces participants to concepts such as cisterns and rain gardens as additional practices homeowners can employ.



**EarthMinded™**

On June 29, 2011 the Columbus GreenSpot Backyard Conservation Program was launched by Mayor Michael B. Coleman, Councilmember Eileen Paley, Franklin Soil and Water Director Jennifer Fish, and representatives from Greif, Inc (EarthMinded) and watershed groups at the Marion Franklin Community Recreation Center. The rain barrel program was branded using Mayor Coleman’s successful public education tool, GreenSpot. The GreenSpot program encourages residents and businesses to go through an application process to commit to a series of behaviors and behavior changes to benefit the environment.

An offer exclusively available to Columbus residents and GreenSpot members allowed for the purchase of one 60 gallon rain barrel per household at the discounted rate. Barrels were purchased in volume at a discount allowing savings to be passed along to residents (barrels valued at \$139 were sold at a cost of \$45). In order to obtain the barrel, residents had to attend one of 14 in-person rain barrel workshops. Workshops were led by local non-profit watershed groups which enabled them to reach potential members and provided the groups revenue to help carry out their mission. In addition, an online option was designed by Franklin Soil and Water to allow participants to watch a rain barrel installation video,

observe a slide show discussing storm water, water conservation, the benefits of rain barrels, and take a quiz allowing residents access to purchase a barrel through PayPal in lieu of attending a workshop. Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District's program pilot-year goal was to distribute one thousand rain barrels to City of Columbus residents during the first year. The program ran from the launch date until October 31<sup>st</sup>, allowing four months for residents to take part.

### ***Program Actions***

The following responsibilities were laid out for the program partners allowing for clear directive. As a pilot program for Franklin Soil and Water and partners, it was important to establish and maintain a framework and keep an open line of communication.

#### ***The City of Columbus provided:***

- Compensation to Franklin Soil and Water in the form of operational grants.
- Program kickoff event with Mayor Michael B. Coleman and partners, including water conservation related events and games for the Mayor's Capital Kids program.
- Advertisement of the program and educational components through the Department of Public Utilities billing and summer newsletter, GreenSpot and City Facebook pages, and DPU webpage's.
- Review and consultation on all outreach materials produced by partners.
- Receipt, including unloading, storage of rain barrel shipments at city facilities.
- Delivery of barrels during first month of program to Franklin Soil and Water facilities for online order pick-up.
- A follow-up mailer from Mayor Michael B. Coleman discussing importance of proper barrel use.
- Mapping of distributed barrels

#### ***Franklin Soil and Water in cooperation with watershed groups provided:***

- Outreach and advertising avenues through watershed group websites, Facebook, and neighborhood networks.
- Workshop facilitator(s) attendance at a train-the-trainer session given by Franklin Soil and Water.
- Workshop facilitation including sign-off sheet/tracking, presentation, distribution of vouchers and barrels and return of unclaimed rain barrels to Franklin Soil and Water office.

#### ***Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District provided:***

- Matching program funds and procurement of rain barrels through conservation funds.
- Workshop scheduling and venue procurement.
- Educational and outreach materials with partner logos.
- Administrative needs including registration, material ordering and distribution, record keeping, reporting and progress tracking.
- Assistance on e-mail and phone calls with landowner questions and concerns.
- Funding to watershed groups for facilitation of workshops and training to members facilitating workshops.
- Development of a Web page complete with Web-based educational media, quiz, and registration ordering system that facilitated online, at-leisure workshops.
- Advertising through Franklin Soil and Water's Web site, newsletters, press releases, Facebook and bi-monthly updates to partners.
- Pick-up of rain barrels at city facilities, storage of barrels, and delivery to workshop venues.
- Facilitation of debriefing meeting with partners as a means of disseminating information on program needs and methods.
- Progress reports to the city and final 2011 program report.

### ***Benefits***

The primary benefit of this effort was that residents were actively engaged in storm water education. By making a conscious decision to purchase and install a rain barrel, they were more likely to be open and receptive to learning more about other actions they can take to protect water quality and conserve potable water. This opportunity was recognized and capitalized on by requiring some form of participation in a workshop, in person or online. This directly supported existing Columbus initiatives and storm water permit requirements.

The program used existing watershed organizations and local government partnerships as a ready made opportunity to reach a large number of residents over a short period of time. This was a straightforward partnership for the reason that each partner had a common end goal; water conservation and storm water outreach. Columbus residents benefited through savings with the purchase of the discounted barrel, savings in their water bill, and education on storm water problems and solutions would be a secondary benefit and overall purpose of the program.

This effort provided repeated conservation messages to increase knowledge retention. Residents received consistent educational messages twice (once through GreenSpot, once through rain barrel workshops – in-person and at-leisure).

A diverse audience was reached by distributing materials and hosting workshops at city libraries evenly distributed throughout the city, and at-leisure workshops on the internet, ensuring easy access to the program for all its residents.

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District benefited by meeting its goal of having an active and effective backyard conservation program and a strong, ongoing relationship with watershed groups and local government. This reduced effort duplication and, funding costs, and improved communication and coordination between local organizations working toward similar objectives.

The Backyard Conservation Rain Barrel Program benefited watershed groups by building on their previous experience with education and rain barrel use and allowed exposure to the watershed group name and membership drive. The program also provided reimbursement funds to the groups for facilitating workshops allowing them resources to continue outreach to local residents.

### ***Results***

The GreenSpot Backyard Conservation Program for rain barrels was a tremendous success. The storm water and water conservation message was received very well by the community and interests observed by other communities throughout central Ohio in continuing the program into the future. Throughout the program, the outlined partners came together to reach for a common goal of educating Columbus households on storm water, water conservation, and problems and solutions associated with these topics.

Franklin Soil and Water was able to develop a framework that will produce efficient use of time and resources and aid in leveraging resources and partners, including additional grassroots groups and civic associations, MS4 municipalities, and the inclusion of the water-minded business community within the model in subsequent years. The hours for the pilot, including research and development, program management and administration, and outreach, established a foundation for future program expansion and marketing.

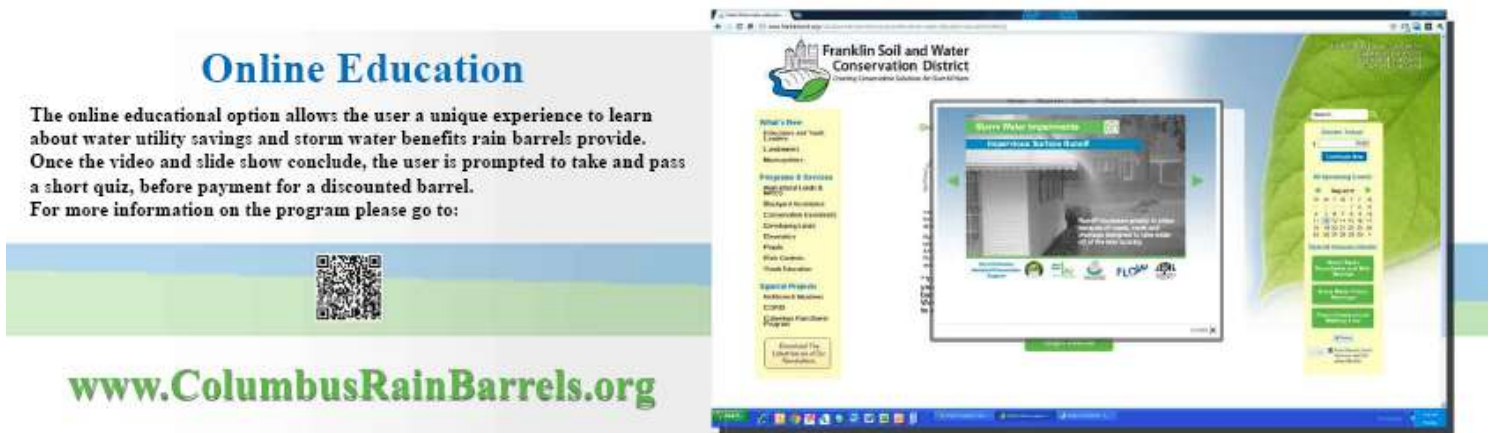
### ***Barrel Distribution and Education Numbers***

Franklin Soil and Water and partners were successful in dispensing **730 rain barrels** (translates to number of households) at a reduced rate through the combination of 14 in-person workshops (215 barrels) and online at-leisure workshops (515 barrels) (*Appendix A with map*). The conservation and storm water educational message reached additional numbers of residents (approximately 75-100 additional) during the 14 in-person workshops, where it was reported by watershed groups that households included a guest to participate at workshops.

### ***Outreach and Education***

In order to get the program and conservation minded message out, a multitude of media was produced for Columbus residents to utilize. Franklin Soil and Water with the help of partners was successful in producing:

- One Website, ColumbusRainBarrels.org, as a platform for the program.
- One slide show for in-person workshop and one slide show tailored for online at-leisure use in conjunction with EarthMinded brand installation video.
- One storm water and water conservation quiz for use for the at-leisure workshop. This online option offered a one-of-a-kind experience, potentially the first in the country, that offered educational components paired with an incentive-based examination on what the user learned.
- One in-person workshop registration form with branding and logos for online and mailer use.
- One handout on rain barrels with branding and logos, reinforcing the conservation and storm water message, for use in in-person and at-leisure workshops.
- One “Frequently Asked Questions” flier describing the details and requirements of the program. The flier was made available online.
- One poster with branding and logos, detailing the program and highlighting the benefits of the educational components for NPDES permit use. The poster was displayed at the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission’s Center for Energy & Environment Summit on Sustainability & the Environment in October.
- One flier with branding and logos for distribution to Columbus Metro Libraries detailing the basics of the online at-leisure workshop, including a QRC code for smart phone savvy consumer use. This code was also used for the NPDES poster (outlined above).
- One front page article in Volume 9, Issue 2 of Franklin Soil and Water’s The Urban Review, September 2011
- The City of Columbus Department of Utilities Summer “Utility Update” ran from July to October, detailing both the water conservation and storm water message and the GreenSpot Backyard Conservation Program for rain barrels. Approximately 300,000 utility bills with the “Utility Update” were mailed throughout the course of the billing cycle.
- Participants of the program received a calendar reminder from the DPU and Mayor Michael B. Coleman, discussing the importance of emptying rain barrels for maximum conservation-storm water benefit and to control any mosquito concerns, as well as to remind participants to disconnect barrels during colder months to avoid freezing and potential cracking.
- Approximately eight articles were published about rain barrels and the rain barrel program from April through September, not including program mentions within various blogs, Facebook posts by each of the partners, and online regional calendar updates (*Appendix B & C*).



### ***Trends***

An investigation of trends for online (Google) searches for rain barrels in 2011 found that Columbus, Ohio ranked third overall within English speaking countries, behind Ottawa, Canada and Portland, Oregon. Within the United States, Columbus ranked second for online searches behind Portland. In addition, Ohio ranked fifth overall among the 50 States for online searches for rain barrels (*Appendix C*). This establishes a baseline for future work, and will facilitate the future goal of placing central Ohio at the top of the ranking.

Research also revealed that this effort was one of the few and maybe the only program of its size that required education as part of a large-scale rain barrel distribution effort, especially through the at-leisure online portion of the program.

### ***Customer comments***

A majority of feedback about the program by residents was positive. Participants expressed an appreciation for the opportunity to have access to low-cost rain barrels and that this was a community wide effort to expand awareness of the value of our water resources.

Complaints that were received included:

- Difficulty understanding how to access the website.
- Inability to purchase rain barrels if they were not a Columbus resident.
- Security concerns with providing credit card information through PayPal.

Franklin Soil and Water worked with residents to resolve complaints when possible. In a few cases, individuals came into the Franklin Soil and Water office and staff assisted them in viewing the presentation and taking the quiz online or assisted with registration and other concerns. Otherwise Franklin Soil and Water staff tried to provide an understanding of the complaints expressed and patiently explained the purpose and limitations of the program, as well as intentions to make improvements where we could for 2012.

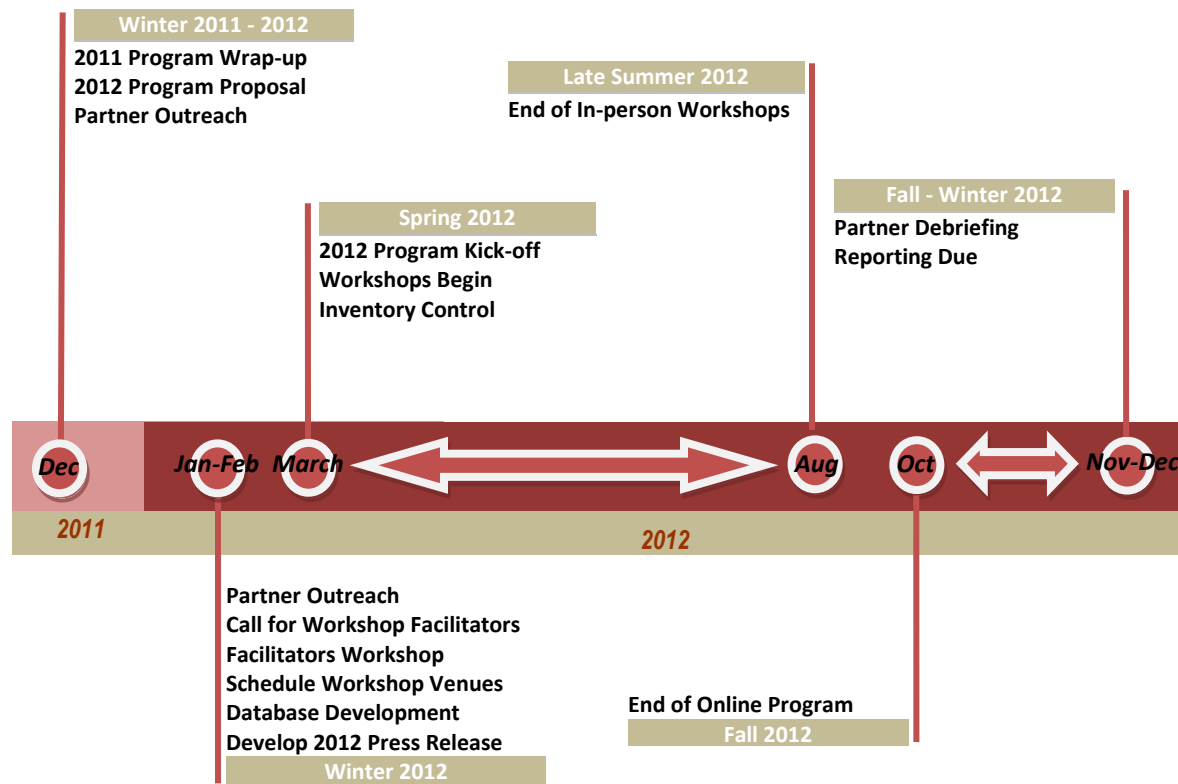
### ***Future Work and Considerations***

Now that a framework and baseline have been established it is essential that partners understand how to move forward smoothly in the future. After the completion of the program in October, partners came together to discuss what went well and what could be improved upon and simplified if we are to go forward for the 2012 season. All criticisms and solutions were recorded and it was agreed upon that the development of a guide book that will outline internal and external responsibilities and partner contacts will be produced. This guidebook will make the framework of the program clearer and simpler for partners. From the partner meeting in November of 2011 the following was discussed for consideration:

#### ***Program Roll Out***

- The 2011 GreenSpot Backyard Conservation Program for rain barrels began relatively late in the season; after the Mayor's announcement on June 29. Many outdoor and gardening enthusiasts begin their outdoor activities early in the spring and are wrapping up activities before the first frost. With this in mind, partners have agreed that an earlier start to the program would be imperative to maximize the conservation message output. A program schedule can be seen below.

## GreenSpot Backyard Conservation Program – Rain Barrels 2011-2012



### *Delivery of Barrels to Department of Utilities (DPU)*

- DPU has agreed to the receiving and unloading of shipments of barrels at the Fairwood facility given that the DPU is notified at least two days in advance of the delivery and given a time of delivery by the shipper. The City of Columbus has the right to refuse delivery of barrels without prior contact.

### *Inventory Control*

- Franklin Soil and Water has agreed to create a database for rain barrel inventory and management of outgoing barrels. This database will also tie into the program's mapping component, taking care to track addresses and zip codes.
- Franklin Soil and Water recommends that the program continue the one barrel per household policy to ensure that inventory and storage can be better controlled, program costs stay relatively low, that resale of barrels does not become a problem, that we do not undercut local rain barrel distributors, and that we maximize the delivery of an educational message.

### *Marketing and Outreach*

- It has been agreed to that the program in the future has a better plan for outreach to a broader audience. The budget will need to reflect additional time and printing costs.
- Gardening groups, sustainability groups, and church green teams will be approached to partner with the program for workshop facilitation and as a target audience.
- The City of Columbus has begun to translate program handouts into additional languages for inclusion of these populations, Spanish, Mandarin, and Somali. Efforts will be made to make these materials available on the program website and mailed to residents as needed.
- Project partners will explore methods to reach out to economically disadvantaged communities. Franklin Soil and Water suggests working with the Columbus Foundation to investigate grant opportunities for subsidization of workshop and barrel costs in targeted communities.
- Efforts will be made to tie into the Columbus Neighborhood Pride program and Area Commissions agenda.



- Efforts will be made to advertise/market the programs within the Columbus Recreation and Parks Bulletin, the Franklin Park Conservatory Bulletin, as well as other municipality bulletins in 2012. Posters will be made available again for distribution to libraries and other bulletins as needed.
- Efforts will be made to update all outreach materials to include additional partner logos and updates to educational message.
- There was no notable correlation between media and outreach efforts and the numbers of participants that took part in both the online and in-person workshop. Consideration will be made for the future program to continue to track any relationship between the two.

### ***Workshops***

- Additional workshop locations were discussed including Franklin Park Conservatory and churches with green initiatives. Consideration will be made for additional workshops in conjunction with outreach to additional municipal partners.
- Add note to registration materials for participants to arrive early to workshop location to sign in.
- Franklin Soil and Water will ask that participants are registered 5 days in advance to allow for processing. Franklin Soil and Water reserves the right to cancel workshops if they do not meet a participant threshold per workshop location. In the case of cancellations, facilitators and registrants will be notified 3 to 4 days in advance. Franklin Soil and Water will work closely with watershed groups to ensure that the groups assist in marketing workshops to garner participant numbers to avoid these circumstances.
- Contact materials will be provided to facilitators with Franklin Soil and Water employee contact number and the delivery company number.
- In some cases, room size was an issue. Consideration will be made to the number of participants allowed and number of barrels delivered in relation to room sizes. This will be noted on the registration.
- The timing of the workshop was an issue in one case, where the library opened at the same time as the workshop. Consideration will be given to allow for better timing.
- For the program year 2011, a 'voucher system' was developed for in-person workshops to be handed out to participants who may have been missing from the sign-in sheet and registration or payment was not received before the workshop date. It was asked by workshop facilitators to make this system for voucher handouts clearer. The voucher system will not be advertised for the program.
- The timing of delivery of rain barrels to workshop locations will be made clearer to watershed groups, with a half hour delivery window before workshop, and worked out with facilitators and the delivery company.
- As previously discussed, outreach to additional groups for inclusion of workshop facilitation will be made available.
- Facilitators asked about what to do in cases of workshop no-shows and extra barrels. Consideration will be given to this concern.
- Registration materials will be provided to facilitators complete with a sign-in sheet for participants to check off before the workshop, initial after the workshop and before exchange of a barrel.
- Consideration will be given for notification to registrants on confirmation of registration to workshops.

### ***Web site***

- The Web site, ColumbusRainBarrels.org, will undergo revision with clear and concise language, the addition of outreach materials, and an update to the slide show educational message and quiz contents.
- Development of an online mapping component will be considered, so that residents can visualize the impact of the program.



### ***Customer Service***

- Franklin Soil and Water has agreed to develop a log for complaints and compliments. This log will also be used to inventory the number of calls and e-mails Franklin Soil and Water receives on the program.
- A survey will be developed for participants of the program to gauge satisfaction, to determine if the barrels were installed, and gauge interest in installation of additional BMP's in the future.

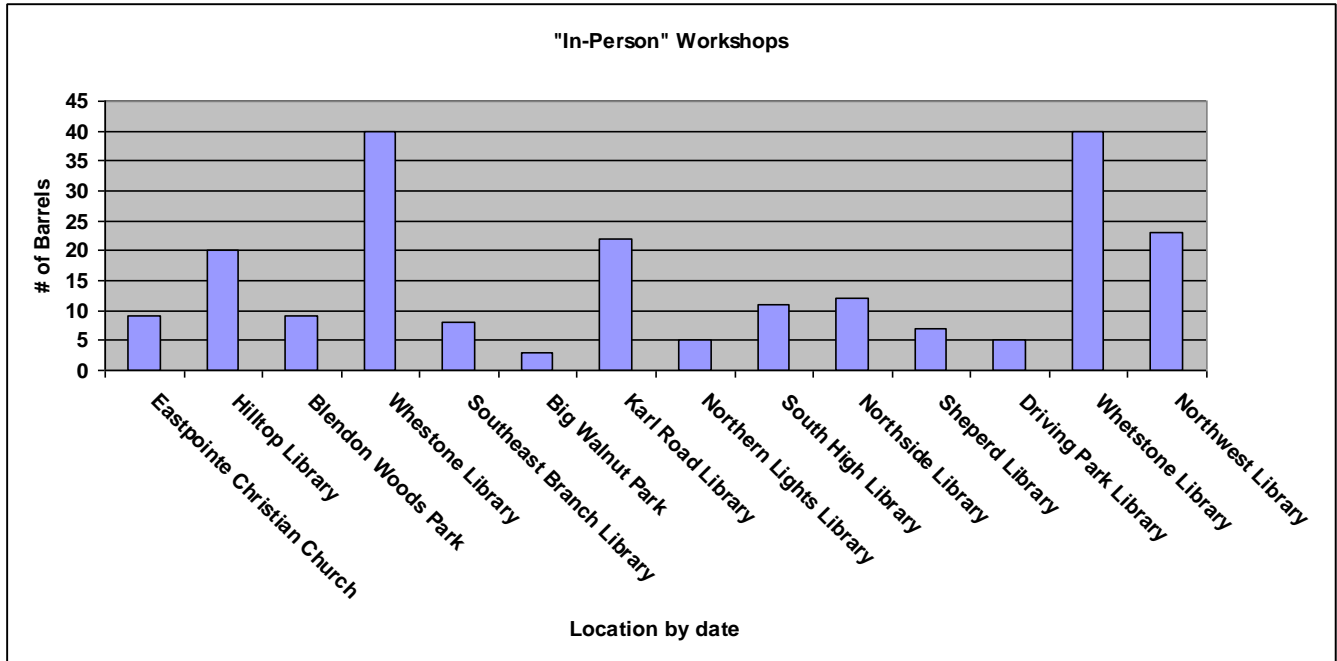
### ***Partner Outreach***

- Develop relationship with local water conservation minded businesses to discuss program objectives with the goal of empowering and partnering with the business community. Through discussion with current partners, there is concern about exclusion of small businesses that retail rain barrels. Efforts will be made to explore options for marketing for businesses and inclusion opportunities through this program of the small business community.

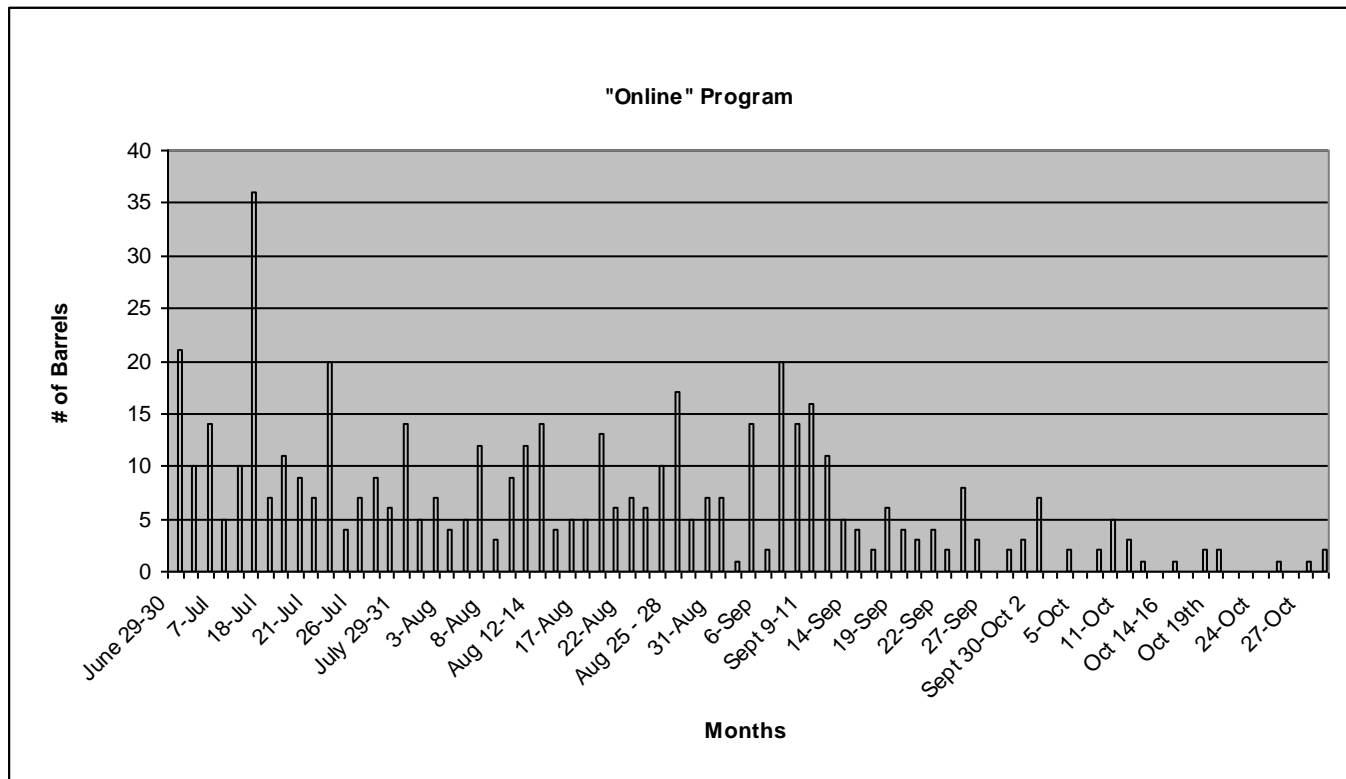
### ***Continued Program Strengthening and Broadening the Impact***

- In regards to future program needs, Franklin Soil and Water will continue with the commitment of strengthening the program through sustained research and partnership building and collaboration. Educational components for outreach will continue to be clarified in the manner and method they are delivered. The GreenSpot Backyard Conservation Program has the potential to be expanded with new concepts that build on the rain barrel as a "gateway BMP" such as rain gardens and other green infrastructure. Throughout the continued program cycle Franklin Soil and Water expects to build on these program concepts to produce a proposal that will take the existing program into the next step from "gateway BMP" to residential green infrastructure; moving from education to tangible water quality solutions.

## Appendix A: Workshop Results

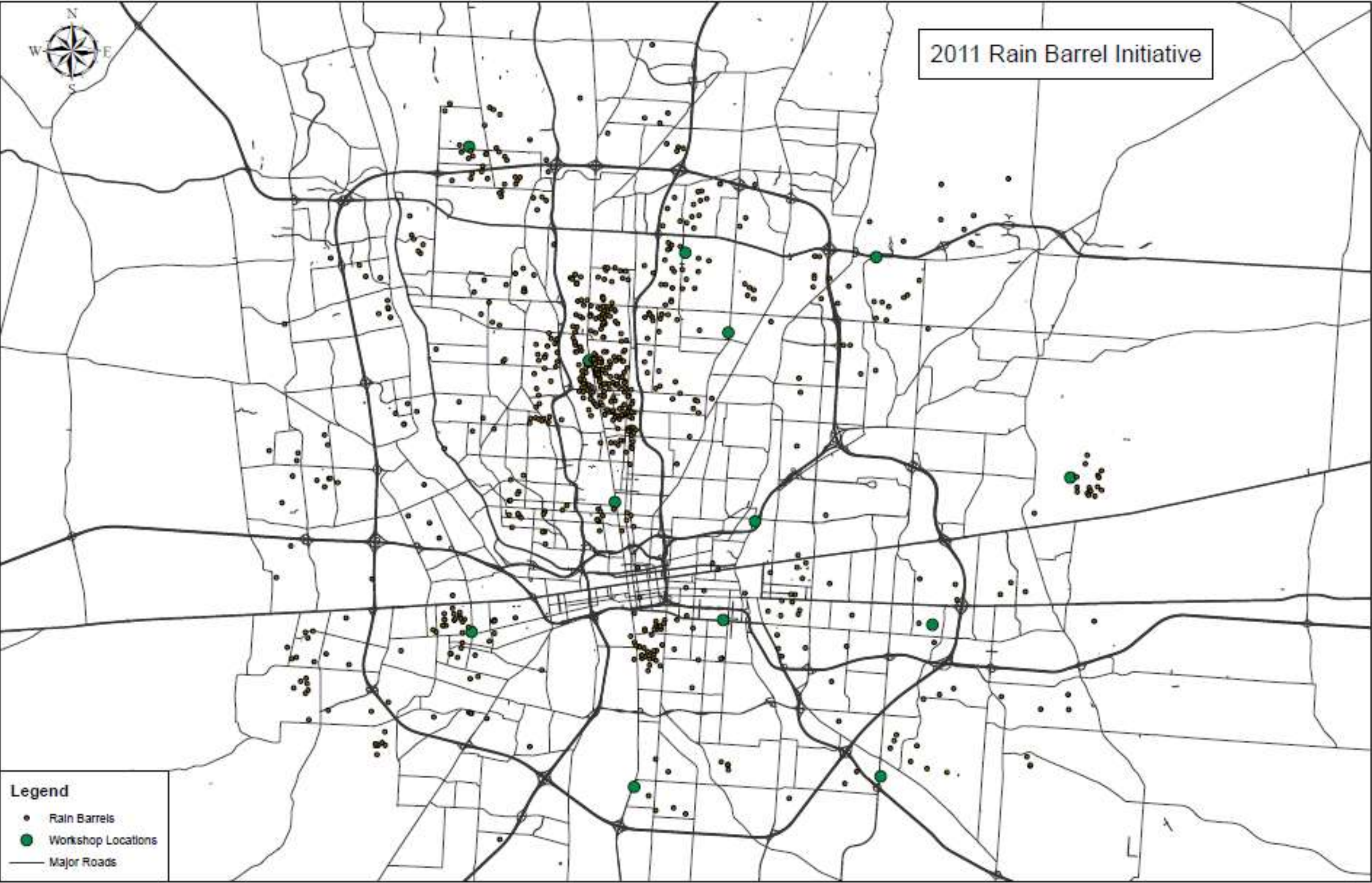


**215 Households Reached**



**515 Households Reached**

Appendix A: Workshop Results - Rain Barrel Distribution Map



## **Appendix B: Public Relations and Outreach**

[Reduce, reuse, recycle: Rain barrels do it all  
Proponents say they save water and money](#)

By Collin Binkley

*The Columbus Dispatch*

April 4, 2011

**Released before Program Kick-off**

[Mayor, Councilmember Paley, Partners Unveil New Program to Provide Discounted Rain Barrels  
United Crestview Area Neighbors](#) – Blog

June 29, 2011

[Low-price rain barrels help homes trickle into green status  
Columbus residents can receive rain barrels for \\$45 after attending class or taking an online quiz.](#)

By Joe Williams

*Pickerington Times-Sun*

July 5, 2011

[New program offers Columbus residents rain barrels at a discount](#)

Press Release

*ThisWeek Community Newspaper*

July 8, 2011

[Discount rain barrels help homes trickle into green status  
Columbus residents can receive rain barrels for \\$45 after attending class or taking an online quiz.](#)

By Joe Williams

*Columbus Local News*

July 11, 2011

[Saving water with rain barrels an economical choice](#)

By Denise Trowbridge

*The Columbus Dispatch*

August 7, 2011

[Water Conservation](#)

*Lower Olentangy Urban Arboretum*

August 7, 2011

[County conservation district promotes rain-barrel program](#)

By Gary Seman Jr.

*ThisWeek Community Newspapers*

September 22, 2011

[Columbus Green Current Events](#)

*Frog Hauling - Blog*

September 6, 2011

[City of Columbus Department of Utilities](#)

[Get Green Columbus](#)

[Community Events Calendar for Franklin County, Ohio](#)

**\* does not include Facebook announcements from Franklin Soil and Water and partners.**



## Appendix C: Program and Outreach Materials



City of Columbus GreenSpot members are invited to buy a discounted rain barrel for only \$45 while supplies last (limit one per household, Columbus residents only).

Not a member yet? Join today at [www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org](http://www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org)

Next, you'll need to either attend a rain barrel workshop by signing up using the registration form on the opposite side of this document OR pass a quiz online at [www.ColumbusRainBarrel.org](http://www.ColumbusRainBarrel.org)

For questions call our friends at Franklin Soil and Water at 614.485.0613

**in partnership with:**



### Registration

Limit one per household

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Columbus residents only): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Workshop: In order to obtain your rain barrel, you must attend a workshop on one of the dates below. Choose ONE. Rain barrels will be distributed to participants at the conclusion of each event.

July 14, 6:30PM, Eastpointe Christian Church, 745 N. Waggoner Rd.  
 July 16, 10:30AM, Hilltop Library, 511 S. Hague Ave.  
 July 21, 6:30PM, Blendon Woods Metro Park, Sycamore Shelter, 4295 E. Dublin-Granville Rd.  
 July 26, 6:30PM, Wheelstone Library, 3909 N. High St.  
 July 26, 6:30PM, Southeast Library, 3950 S. Hamilton Rd.  
 July 30, 10:30AM, Big Walnut Shelter House, 5000 E. Livingston  
 August 4, 6:30PM, Karl Road Library, 5590 Karl Rd.  
 August 6, 10:30AM, Northern Lights Library, 4093 Cleveland Ave.  
 August 11, 6:30PM, South High Library, 3540 S. High St.  
 August 13, 10:30AM, Northside Library, 1423 N. High St.  
 August 18, 6:30PM, Shepherd Library, 750 N. Nelson Rd.  
 August 20, 10:30AM, Driving Park Library, 1566 E. Livingston Ave.  
 August 25, 6:30PM, Wheelstone Library, 3909 N. High St.  
 September 1, 6:30PM, Northwest Library, 2280 Hard Rd.

Payment: ☐ Cash ☐ Check (made payable to Franklin Soil and Water)

Submit your payment of \$45 and completed registration to:

Franklin Soil and Water  
 1328 Dublin Rd., Suite 101  
 Columbus, OH 43215

Don't forget to register as a GreenSpot at [www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org](http://www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org)  
 Questions? Call 614.485.0613

The EarthVest™ RainBarrel™ RS-0011 is a simple to use and attractive rain barrel for home rainwater collection and storage. Our large capacity, 55-gallon rain barrel connects to your downspout and automatically collects rain water from your home's roof.

Capacity: 55 gallons  
 Color: Tan/white  
 Dimensions: 30" x 26.5" x 28.5"

- Includes all parts for easy installation
- EarthVest™ Downspout automatically passes excess water through the downspout to prevent flooding
- Safe easy installation, installs in minutes
- A large opening lid with locking feature for safety
- Stained system keeps rain free of debris, pests and sunlight
- Complete construction HDPE with 5-year UV-inhibitor for years of trouble free use
- Warranty of 5 years



Registration Form available online, at Franklin Soil & Water office (mailer), & printed for libraries distribution.

### Why rain barrels?

You may be wondering why the City of Columbus would sponsor a program to provide you with a free rain barrel. Read on to find out!



When it rains, water from roofs, driveways, sidewalks, and roads is directed to storm drain inlets and tunnels, unfiltered and untreated, straight to the nearest stream or river. As it travels towards the stream, this rain "runoff" often picks up pesticides, excess nutrients from fertilizers and pet waste, litter, and fluids from leaking cars. These pollutants create a harmful environment for animals and people.

The amount of runoff itself can be a problem because the stream is not able to accommodate the extra water it's receiving. The sudden surge and velocity of the runoff to the stream causes soil to erode away along the stream bank. Erosion causes mudslides, or sedimentation, in the stream which harms wildlife, and can cause homeowners to lose land and property along an eroded stream bank.



Rain barrels are usually plastic containers including a lid, spigot, non-flow system and a diverter to take water away from the house and into the barrel to be used at a later date.

**Backyard Conservation Program**


**GREEN SPOT**

**in partnership with:**



### Keeping your new rain barrel in good condition

- Tools are available locally to borrow, so there is no need to buy expensive power tools for installation. Find more information on the tool library [www.rainbarrelinfo.org/toollibrary.htm](http://www.rainbarrelinfo.org/toollibrary.htm)
- Elevate your barrel up to 2 feet on blocks or bricks so that a watering can or bucket can be placed under the spigot. Even after placing the barrel on a tier water pressure will be too low to operate a sprinkler. However, you can attach a soaker hose to gradually water your plants and empty the barrel.
- With more than one rain barrel you can connect them together in order to store more water or you could place one at each of your downspouts. While our program cannot offer a household more than one rain barrel, they are becoming popular and have become easier to find as a result. Most large home improvement and garden stores now sell rain barrels. They can also be found at specialty stores and can be ordered online. Visit Franklin Soil and Water's web site for a list of vendors, [www.franklinsoil.org](http://www.franklinsoil.org)
- Do not use collected water for drinking, cooking or bathing. If a pest killer has been used on the roof, let a few rain words bypass the barrel before collecting water.
- Keep the lid secure so children or animals cannot get into the barrel.
- Use the water in your barrel within one week so that it is empty before the next rainfall.
- Empty your barrel and store it in the garage or basement each fall to prevent it from spilling when the water freezes in the winter. This is a good time to give it a thorough cleaning to remove any accumulated debris and algae.



Handout available through workshop and online for program participants.

## Appendix C: Program and Outreach Materials



### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What are the product specifications for the rain barrel?**

A: The EarthMinded™ RainStation™ RS-0001 is a simple-to-use and attractive rain barrel for home rainwater collection and storage. The large capacity, 60-gallon rain barrel connects to your downspout and automatically collects runoff water from your home's roof.

**Capacity:** 60 gallons  
**Color:** TerraCotta  
**Dimensions:** 29" x 28.5" x 28.5"

- Includes all parts for easy installation
- Finale™ Diverter automatically passes excess water through the downspout to prevent flooding
- Hide saw included, installs in minutes
- A large opening lid with locking feature for safety
- Sealed system keeps out mosquitoes, pests and sunlight
- Durable construction HOPF with 5 year UV inhibitor, for years of trouble free use
- Valued at \$129

**Q: When will I receive my rain barrel?**

A: If you are making your purchase via the web based workshop, you will be required to pick up your rain barrel at the Franklin Soil and Water office at 1328 Dublin Rd., Suite 101, Monday- Wednesday, 9:00AM-4:00PM.

If you have opted to attend an in-person workshop, you will receive your rain barrel at the conclusion of the event.

Special shipping, delivery or pick up arrangements will not be made. This ensures that rain barrels can be provided at a low cost.

**Q: What if I cannot make a rain barrel workshop?**

A: There are many workshop dates scheduled. If you cannot make it to any of the scheduled workshops, try ordering online to allow you the opportunity to pick up Monday- Wednesday, 9:00AM-4:00PM at the Franklin Soil and Water office at 1328 Dublin Rd., Suite 101.



**Q: Will I need a large vehicle or truck in order to transport my rain barrel home?**

A: No. The rain barrel can be easily lifted into the back seat of a car as small as a Mini Cooper for transportation home.

**Q: Can I purchase more than one rain barrel?**

A: Due to high demand we can only offer one discounted rain barrel per household. However, rain barrels are sold at many local retailers. A list of these companies and related coupons are available on the program website.

**Q: If I am unsatisfied with my rain barrel can I return my purchase?**

A: No. All sales are final.

**Q: Do I have to purchase any other required parts?**

A: All required parts and attachments are included with the rain barrel. However, there are some optional items you may want to consider purchasing separately including a riser to elevate your barrel, pumps and soaker hoses. You will learn about these options and local retailers during your workshop.

**Q: Do I have to purchase and/or construct a rain barrel riser/stand?**

A: A riser is optional, but recommended in order to optimize water pressure. Ideally, the barrel should be elevated two feet from the ground. There are many ways to build a riser and ideas on how to do this will be provided to you during your workshop.

**Q: Can you help me install my rain barrel?**

A: No. However, it is easy to install your new rain barrel and instructions will be provided during your workshop. You can download a rain barrel user manual on our website to learn about the installation process and/or watch the video provided online.

If you cannot install the barrel on your own, you can hire a local "handyman" business to assist you.

**Q: What are the requirements for the in person workshop?**


A: - Attendance is mandatory and you must arrive on time.  
 - You must have joined the GreenSpot program ([www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org](http://www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org))  
 - You must be a valid resident of City of Columbus. Addresses will be verified.

**Q: What are the requirements for the online workshop?**

A: - You must pass a web based quiz after watching a slide show presentation and installation video in order to receive the discount rate.  
 - You must have joined the GreenSpot program ([www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org](http://www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org))  
 - You must be a valid resident of City of Columbus. Addresses will be verified.

**Q: What if I have additional questions not answered here?**

A: Please refer to the EarthMinded™ RainStation™ website [www.EarthMinded.com](http://www.EarthMinded.com) for information on the following: Installation, Use and Maintenance, and Trouble Shooting. Other questions can be answered by the Franklin Soil and Water staff by calling 614-486-9614.



### FAQ sheet available on online home page of program



### Rain Barrel Program

**It's Not Too Late! Prepare For Next Spring!**

Residents of the City of Columbus who sign up as a GreenSpot member are invited to buy a discounted rain barrel for only \$45.00.

**Limit of one rain barrel per household. Program Ends October 31st.**

Not a GreenSpot member yet? Join today at [www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org](http://www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org)

Next, you'll need to watch an installation video and slide show discussing the benefits of rain barrels, and take a short quiz online at:

[www.ColumbusRainBarrels.org](http://www.ColumbusRainBarrels.org)



For questions call Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District at 614.486.9613





### Outreach Poster to Libraries

### Columbus Backyard Conservation Program

Volume 9, Issue 2  
September 2011



City of Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman, Councilmember Edilee Foley, Jennifer Fish of Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, and Geoff, Inc. announced the launch of the Columbus GreenSpot Backyard Conservation Program on June 29th. This new program, administered by Franklin Soil and Water, offers Columbus residents the chance to purchase a rain barrel at less than one-third of the retail price. Residents who are interested in participating are required to first register their home as a GreenSpot and then attend a workshop held by a local watershed group, or they can complete an online workshop and pass a quiz at [www.ColumbusRainBarrels.org](http://www.ColumbusRainBarrels.org).

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District worked with Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed and Friends of Alum Creek and Yohimban to target Columbus neighborhoods with workshops held throughout the summer.

The overall goal of the program is to improve the environmental stewardship and water conservation of City of Columbus residents. The workshops provide information on the impacts of storm water runoff on water quality and flooding, and offer tools to act on decisions by removing perceived barriers to the use of rain barrels as storm water best management practice. Although rain barrels are not a one-call for reducing runoff, this practice can benefit the homeowner and the environment by reducing use of treated water for landscaping.

This program focuses on rain barrels as a "gateway" rather than storm water best management practice that is highly popular with homeowners, affordable and easy to use. Rain barrel workshops are also a proven method to educate about water conservation.

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In addition to the in-person workshops, Franklin Soil and Water has created an online version of the workshop illustrating storm water and water conservation concepts, as well as including step by step instructions for rain barrel installation. This media resource is used in conjunction with an online quiz and registration to give city residents the opportunity to buy a rain barrel at a reduced rate without attending a workshop. These opportunities allow the program to reach a broader audience.

The GreenSpot Backyard Conservation Program for rain barrels has been a tremendous success thus far, and will continue with the online workshop through October, 2011. Franklin Soil and Water is exploring the continuation of the program in 2012 with the partnering of additional municipal partners. The program is expected to run on a seasonal basis.



Reduced cost rain barrels are limited to one per household. Additional barrels can be purchased at local retailers. To find out more about this program go to [www.ColumbusRainBarrels.org](http://www.ColumbusRainBarrels.org) or if you are interested in establishing a rain barrel program in your community, call our office at 614-486-9613.



### The Urban Review: Outreach to Technical Partners



## Appendix C: Program and Outreach Materials



### GreenSpot Backyard Conservation Rain Barrel Program, City of Columbus

There are a variety of ways in which the City of Columbus meets and exceeds its NPDES permit requirements for public education. Some of these methods include providing information to utility customers via educational bill inserts, hosting a field trip for area school children to learn about water related issues at the Department of Public Utilities facility and, in 2011, an existing rain barrel program was given new life through a partnership established by Mayor Michael B. Coleman with EarthMinded (a subsidiary of Groff, Inc.), Franklin Soil and Water and local watershed groups.

The program began to take shape in 2009 as EarthMinded designed a new rain barrel- one that was easy to install, functional and attractive. The City of Columbus was given the opportunity to provide input and disperse free barrels to residents in one Columbus neighborhood to test the equipment and monitor results. The Rain Station barrel proved popular with residents. Through the generosity of EarthMinded, barrels were distributed to program administrators at a discount allowing savings to be passed along to residents (barrels were sold at a cost of \$45 and valued at \$139). This enabled Mayor Coleman to utilize city funds (approximately \$40,000) to secure the services of Franklin Soil and Water to administer the program and educate residents about storm water and water conservation.



#### "Gateway" Best Management Practice

The EarthMinded<sup>®</sup> RainStation<sup>™</sup> RS-0001 is a simple-to-use and attractive rain barrel for home rainwater collection and storage. The large capacity, 60-gallon rain barrel connects to your downspout and automatically collects runoff water from your home's roof. Collecting rain water allows for water utility savings for home gardeners, and is a the perfect "gateway" storm water best management practice. The rain barrel program highlights these important points and introduces participants to concepts such as cisterns and rain garden as additional practices homeowners can employ.



The rain barrel program was branded using the Mayor Coleman's successful public education tool, GreenSpot. The GreenSpot program encourages residents and businesses to go through an application process to commit to a series of behaviors to benefit the environment. An offer exclusively available to GreenSpot members allowed the purchase of one 60 gallon rain barrel per household at the discounted rate. In order to obtain the barrel, residents had to watch a rain barrel installation video, observe a slide show discussing the benefits of rain barrels, and take a quiz online or attend one of 14 workshops to ensure an understanding of related concepts. Workshops were led by local non-profit watershed groups which enabled them to reach potential members and provided them revenue to help carry out their mission. The process ensured that NPDES permit requirements were met as residents received consistent educational messages twice (once through GreenSpot, once through rain barrel program) for greater likelihood of retention. A diverse audience was reached by distributing materials and hosting workshops at all city libraries evenly distributed throughout the city, ensuring easy access to the program for all its residents.

#### Online Education

The online educational option allows the user a unique experience to learn about water utility savings and storm water benefits rain barrels provide. Once the video and slide show conclude, the user is prompted to take and pass a short quiz, before payment for a discounted barrel. For more information on the program please go to:



[www.ColumbusRainBarrels.org](http://www.ColumbusRainBarrels.org)



On June 29th the program was kicked off and by August 1st, 348 rain barrels had been purchased by residents. Program administrators expect to disperse a total of 1400 barrels by the end of the program in October. The educational message of the program reached beyond participants as a result of local media coverage.

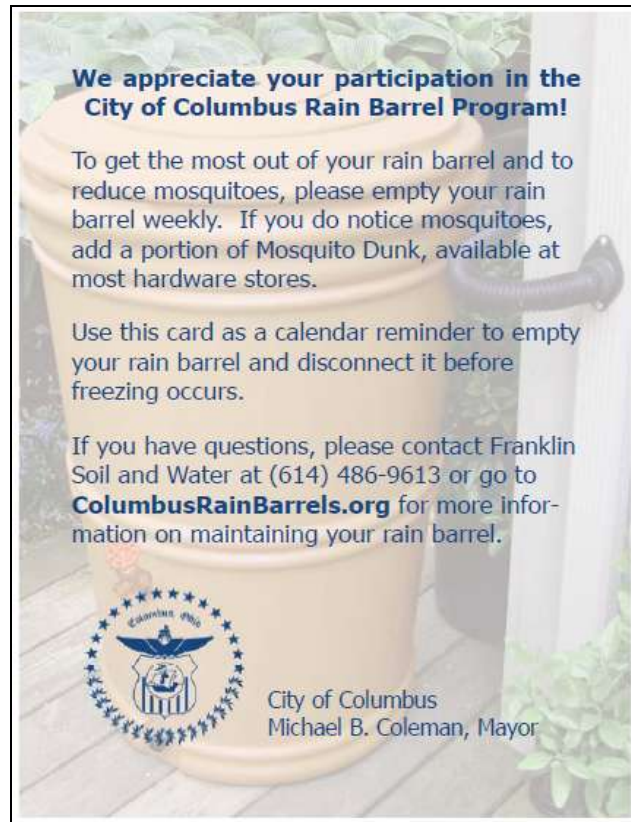
In Partnership with:



Outreach Poster for MORPC Summit for Sustainability & the Environment



## Appendix C: Program and Outreach Materials



City Of Columbus Department of Utilities Reminder Mailer



Michael B. Coleman,  
Mayor



utility  
update  
November 2011 | Tatyana Ansh, P.E., Director



cdpu  
Columbus Department of  
Public Utilities

### Water Reuse and Conservation

#### Protecting Our Water Supply

When rain falls on land, it either seeps into the ground or becomes runoff flowing into streams, lakes and rivers. The Columbus Department of Public Utilities draws from surface water sources – Hoover Reservoir on Big Walnut Creek, Griggs and O'Shaughnessy Reservoirs on the Scioto River – as well as ground water collected in wells located in southern Franklin County.



Polluted runoff is the largest threat to water quality. Rain water travels across yards, pavement, rooftops and streets carrying pollutants into storm drains that empty into nearby rivers or into our sewer system. Pollutants come from every day activities including the use of pesticides, fertilizers and soaps, as well as yard waste, pet waste, oil and grease.

Did you know that you can save money on your water bill and help protect the quality of our source water just by making a few changes in your gardening practices?

#### Reuse Rain Water

Collect stormwater in a rain barrel for later use. Placed under a downspout, rain barrels collect some of the water that runs off your roof, storing it for later use. Attach a spiker hose to water garden plants or fill a watering can to use on potted plants.



#### Garden with Native Plants

Native plants have an extensive root system that absorbs moisture from deep in the soil. This means that once established, they require very little water. Because they have adapted to local soil and climate conditions, native plants thrive without fertilizers.

The deep roots break up clay soil increasing its ability to soak in stormwater, slowing the flow and filtering pollutants before they enter our waterways. All this adds up to less time and money spent on landscaping and cleaner streams and rivers.

#### Columbus GreenSpot Backyard Conservation Program

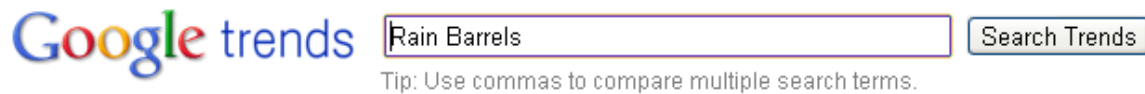
City of Columbus GreenSpot members are invited to buy discounted rain barrels while supplies last (limit one per household, Columbus residents only). Not yet a member? It's easy to join at [www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org](http://www.ColumbusGreenSpot.org). Members can attend a rain barrel workshop in person or pass a quiz online. More information, registration and the online quiz can be found at [www.ColumbusRainBarrels.org](http://www.ColumbusRainBarrels.org). For questions, call Franklin Soil and Water at 486-9613.



 Join Columbus Public Utilities on Facebook for conservation tips and updates.

Billing Statement Insert on Program

## Appendix D: Internet search trends for Rain Barrels in 2011



### Cities

1. Ottawa, Canada	
2. Portland, OR, USA	
3. Columbus, OH, USA	
4. Seattle, WA, USA	
5. Austin, TX, USA	
6. Minneapolis, MN, USA	
7. Chicago, IL, USA	
8. Washington, DC, USA	
9. Toronto, Canada	
10. Houston, TX, USA	

### Cities

1. Portland, OR, USA	
2. Columbus, OH, USA	
3. Austin, TX, USA	
4. Seattle, WA, USA	
5. Minneapolis, MN, USA	
6. Chicago, IL, USA	
7. Washington, DC, USA	
8. Houston, TX, USA	
9. New York, NY, USA	

### Subregions

1. <a href="#">Wisconsin</a> , United States	
2. <a href="#">Maryland</a> , United States	
3. <a href="#">Kentucky</a> , United States	
4. <a href="#">Iowa</a> , United States	
5. <a href="#">Ohio</a> , United States	
6. <a href="#">Kansas</a> , United States	
7. <a href="#">North Carolina</a> , United States	
8. <a href="#">Washington</a> , United States	
9. <a href="#">Minnesota</a> , United States	
10. <a href="#">Oregon</a> , United States	